

52-01-18

## **Restore Public Access Across Railroad Tracks**

In the 2005-2006 state budget, a bill was passed that removed the ability of the public to cross railroad tracks except at designated crossings. The result for Wisconsin hunters and anglers was not legally being able to cross railroad tracks to access public hunting and fishing locations and being threatened with trespassing citations by the railroad companies. The DNR estimates 134 common crossing locations were lost as a result of the law, and a review by the Office of the Commissioner of Railroads estimated costs of \$7-\$10 million to install only 14 designated crossings. By only using designated crossing, hunters and anglers can be forced to walk multiple miles to access a location that may be only steps away if they could legally cross the railroad tracks.

Railroad tracks run through 121 public properties, removing reasonable access to public lands and waters for hunters and anglers as well as other members of the general public who recreate on public lands and waters.

Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conservation Congress at its annual meeting held in Racine County on April 9th, 2018, work with the Wisconsin Legislature to remove the railroad trespassing law and restore public access across railroad tracks without the requirement of using designated crossings.

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